

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 KUWAIT 4581

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PPDC, KU, US
SUBJ: KUWAITI AMIR DOUBTS POSSIBILITY FOR SUCCESS FOR CAMP DAVID
MEETING

REF: (A) STATE 205969, (B) KUWAIT 4481

1. SUMMARY: DURING A MEETING AUGUST 16 IN WHICH I DELIVERED THE PRESIDENTIAL LETTER TO KUWAIT'S AMIR (REF A), I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENCOURAGE KUWAIT TO JOIN IN EXPRESSING AT LEAST HOPE FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE CAMP DAVID MEETING IN VIEW OF THE DEDICATED EFFORT UNDERTAKEN BY PRESIDENT CARTER AND AS A GESTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF US-KUWAIT COOPERATION. WHILE EMPHASIZING THAT MIDDLE EAST PEACE, INCLUDING A SOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM, WAS A GENERAL AND OVERALL KUWAITI OBJECTIVE, THE AMIR RIGIDLY ADHERED TO AND CONFIRMED THE CONTINUING GOK POSITION OF SKEPTICISM OVER THE POSSIBLE SUCCESS OF THE CAMP DAVID MEETING (REF B) AND GENERAL OPPOSITION TO THE CONTINUATION OF EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI DIALOGUE. HE DID NOT BELIEVE IT WAS FAIR TO ASK KUWAIT TO SUPPORT A MEETING WHICH THEY BELIEVED WOULD HAVE DOUBTFUL RESULTS AT BEST. THE AMIR DID EXPRESS HOPE THAT THE CAMP DAVID RESULTS WOULD BE SUCH AS TO CHANGE KUWAIT'S OPINION, BUT THE GOK WAS VERY DUBIOUS AND SKEPTICAL IN THIS REGARD. END SUMMARY.

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2. I CALLED ON AMIR SHAIKH JABER AL-AHMAD AL-SABAH ON AUG 16 IN ORDER TO DELIVER THE LETTER FROM PRESIDENT CARTER TRANSMITTED BY REF A. AT MY REQUEST, THE AMIR READ THE LETTER PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF ANY DISCUSSION.

3. THE AMIR BEGAN HIS REMARKS BY STATING THAT ESTABLISHMENT OF PEACE IN THE AREA BY SOLVING THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM AND

RESTORING THE ISRAELI-OCCUPIED LANDS TO THE ARABS WAS KUWAIT'S GENRAL AND OVERALL OBJECTIVE. HE CONCEDED THAT THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAD ATTEMPTED AND IS CONTINUING TO ATTEMPT TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM. HOWEVER, KUWAIT'S PAST EXPERIENCE TELLS THEM THAT IT IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR ISRAEL TO SURRENDER THESE LANDS. THIS SAME EXPERIENCE ALSO CONFIRMS THAT IT IS IN ISRAEL'S INTEREST TO MAINTAIN THE STATUS QUO AND, USING ONE EXCUSE OR ANOTHER PERTAINING TO SECURITY REQUIREMENTS, NOT TO RETURN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.

4. THE AMIR SAID THAT HE HAD PREVIOUSLY EXPRESSED THIS VIEW TO EGYPTIAN VICE PRESIDENT MOBAREK REGARDING PRESIDENT SADAT'S INITIATIVE WITH WHICH KUWAIT WAS NOT IN AGREEMENT. IT HAS BEEN PROVEN THAT THE EGYPTIAN INITIATIVE HAS ACHIEVED NOTHING. SADAT HAS MADE ALL SORTS OF CONCESSIONS, BUT RECEIVED NOTHING FROM ISRAEL IN RETURN. EVEN THE FACT THAT SADAT WENT AGAINST THE WISHES OF THE WHOLE ARAB WORLD WAS NOT APPRECIATED BY ISRAEL.

5. NOTING THAT HE HAD RECENTLY CONVEYED THIS OPINION TO SAUDI ARABIAN DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER AL-MANSOURI (ON AUG 14), THE AMIR SAID KUWAIT ATTACHED NO IMPORTANCE TO THE CAMP DAVID MEETING BECAUSE IT WAS CERTAIN THAT ISRAEL WOULD NOT RESTORE ANY RIGHTS TO THE PALESTINIANS. NEVERTHELESS, HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE US ADMINISTRATION WILL EXERT FURTHER PRESSURE ON ISRAEL TO EVACUATE ARAB LANDS. THE AMIR CONCLUDED
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HIS COMMENTS BY SAYING THAT, AS FAR AS HE WAS CONCERNED, THERE WAS NOTHING NEW IN THIS KUWAITI POSITION.

6. I EXPRESSED MY APPRECIATION FOR THIS DETAILED EXPLANATION OF THE GOK POSITION, WHIH I NOTED WAS CONSISTENT WITH MY UNDERSTANDINGOF IT AS THE RESULT OF EARLIER DISCUSSIONS WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER.

7. I THOUGHT IT USEFUL AT THIS POINT TO PROVIDE AS BACKGROUND SOME OF THE COMMENTS MADE BY PRESIDENT CARTER IN HIS JUST-PUBLICIZED "US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT" INTERVIEW WHERE HE NOTED HOW HE APPROACHED THIS DECISION FOR HOLDING A SUMMIT AND THE RISKS WHICH IT ENTAILED AS WELL AS HIS DESCRIPTION OF THE ROLE AND STAKE THE US HAD IN THE CAMP DAVID MEETING. I DID THIS IN ORDER TO HIGHLIGHT THE IMMMENSE RESPONSIBILITY THE PRESIDENT HAD ASSUMED IN THIS MATTER.

8. I THEN VENTURED THE VIEW, IN LIGHT OF THIS UNUSUAL AND BOLD INITIATIVE ON THE PART OF PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE USG, THAT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE FOR KUWAIT AT LEAST TO EXPRESS HOPE FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE CAMP DAVID MEETING, EVEN IF KUWAIT CONTINUED TO RETAIN DOUBTS AS TO ITS POTENTIAL

ACCOMPLISHMENTS. I THOUGHT THIS WOULD BE AN APPROPRIATE GESTURE WHICH COULD BE MADE IN THE CONTEXT OF US-KUWAIT COOPERATION.

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9. THIS SUGGESTION SOMEWHAT STARTLED THE AMIR WHO, AFTER PAUSING FOR A MOMENT, DECLARED IT WAS NOT FAIR TO EXPECT KUWAIT TO SUPPORT A MEETING WHICH IT BELIEVED WOULD YIELD NO GOOD RESULTS. THE AMIR THEN SAID HE DID HOPE CAMP DAVID WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL. IF SO, IT MIGHT SERVE TO CHANGE THE KUWAITI ATTITUDE. HE ALSO EXPRESSED THE BELIEF THAT THIS QUESTION WAS SOMETHING APART FROM OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS WHICH HE WAS PLEASED WERE GOOD. THE AMIR ADDED THAT THIS WAS IN FACT THE OPINION HE EXPRESSED TO THE SAUDI REPRESENTATIVE AL-MANSOURI WHITH WHOM HE HAD DISAGREED ON THE SUBJECT OF THE CAMP DAVID MEETING. HE THEN DECLARED THAT THE GOK WOULD NOT TALK ABOUT THE MEETING, NOT ATTACK IT, NOR EXPRESS ANY OPINIONS ABOUT IT PUBLICLY.

10. I EXPLAINED THAT I DID NOT INTEND TO SUGGEST ANYTHING THAT COULD BE CONSTRUED AS UNFAIR. I UNDERLINED THE CONSIDERABLE ENGAGEMENT OF PRESIDENTIAL AND USG PRESTIGE IN THIS EFFORT TO RESOLVE A PROBLEM OF SUCH SUPREME IMPORTANCE TO THE ARAB WORLD AND WHICH, WERE IT NOT FOR THE TOTAL DEDICATION OF PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE US TO PEACE, NEED NOT HAVE BEEN NECESSARY FOR US TO UNDERTAKE AT ALL. IT IS, OF COURSE, POSSIBLE THAT THE CAMP DAVID MEETING WILL NOT ACHIEVE THE DESIRED SUCCESS, BUT IT WOULD NOT BE FOR LACK OF TRYING ON OUR PART.

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11. THE AMIR, STILL SOMEWHAT DISTURBED BY THE COURSE OF OUR DISCUSSION, SUGGESTED THERE WAS A GREAT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DOUBTS AND HOPE. HE OFFERED AS AN EXAMPLE THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE MEETING WOULD RESULT IN A MINOR SUCCESS WHICH WOULD SERVE TO KEEP EGYPT ENGAGED IN THIS VICIOUS CIRCLE OF NEGOTIATIONS TO WHICH KUWAIT OBJECTED. I FELT THAT AN EXPRESSION OF HOPE BY THE GOK AT THIS STAGE WOULD IN NO WAY PREVENT IT FROM GIVING ITS OWN ASSESSMENT OF THE RESULTS OF THE MEETING AFTER IT WAS OVER. THE AMIR THEN MORE PRECISELY DEFINED HIS EARLIER COMMENT ABOUT HOPE (PARA 9 ABOVE) BY REITERATING THAT IT WAS EXPRESSED AS A HOPE THE SUCCESS OF THE CAMP DAVID MEETING WOULD BE SUCH AS TO CHANGE KUWAIT'S POSITION OPPOSING FURTHER TALKS BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL. THE AMIR STRESSED HE HAD NEVER DENIED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAD GIVEN THIS SUBJECT A GREAT DEAL OF SERIOUS ATTENTION, BUT HE ASKED AGAIN WHAT ARE THE RESULTS GOING TO BE.

12. I SAW NO FURTHER PURPOSE IN PROLONGING THIS DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDED THE MEETING BY THANKING THE AMIR FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO DELIVER PERSONALLY PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER AND FOR HIS FRANK AND DETAILED EXPLANATION OF THE KUWAITI POSITION, ADDITING THAT I VALUED THE CORDIAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION WHICH EXISTED BETWEEN KUWAIT AND THE US.

13. COMMENT: I BELIEVE THE APPROACH I UNDERTOOK WOULD PROBABLY HAVE HAD MORE SUCCESS WITH THE LATE AMIR WHO WAS LESS RIGID AND INFLEXIBLE THAN JABER AL-AHMAD. IN ANY EVENT, THE SAUDIS APPARENTLY HAD NO SUCCESS EITHER. CLEARLY, THE AMIR AND THE GOK FEEL VERY STRONGLY THAT SADAT HAS DEMEANED HIMSELF BY GOING, HAT-IN-HAND SO TO SPEAK, TO THE IRRAELIS AND HAS RECEIVED LESS THAN NOTHING IN RETURN. THIS IS REGARDED HERE NOT ONLY AS A DISAPPOINTMENT FOR SADAT BUT ALSO AS AN EMBARRASSMENT TO THE ARAB WORLD. THE AMIR AND THE GOK
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EVIDENTLY FEEL THAT THE CAMP DAVID MEETING WILL PRODUCE MORE OF THE SAME OR THAT IT MAY BE MARGINALLY SUCCESSFUL ONLY TO THE EXTENT OF PROLONGING WITHOUT CONCRETE PROGRESS THE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI DIALOGUE WHICH THEY VISCERALLY OPPOSE. ANYWAY, PERHAPS I HAVE GIVEN THE AMIR SOME FOOD FOR THOUGHT THAT INTERNATIONAL AND BILATERAL RELATIONS CANNOT NECESSARILY BE EASILY COMPARTMENTALIZED.

14. BECAUSE THIS MESSAGE CONCERN'S PRESIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENCE, I HAVE NOT REPEATED IT TO OTHER POSTS, BUT SUGGEST THAT THE DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO RETRANSMIT IT TO AMEMBASSIES ABU DHABI,

AMMAN, CAIRO, DAMASCUS, DOHA, JIDDA, MANAMA, MUSCAT AND TEL AVIV

FOR THEIR INFORMATION.

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